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**Connecticut Water Company
Testimony Before the Committee on Children
February 22, 2011**

RE: HB- 6401 – An Act Concerning Hexavalent Chromium in Drinking Water

The Connecticut Water Company joins with the Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA) in **urging the Committee on Children not to adopt HB-6401- *An Act Concerning Hexavalent Chromium in Drinking Water***. We understand and appreciate the efforts of the Committee to adopt laws to protect the health and safety of the children in our state, but believe it is premature to adopt legislation in Connecticut that would require testing and standards for hexavalent chromium.

Water companies are subject to a host of state and federal water quality standards and Connecticut Water Company has a long record of compliance with those standards. As new standards have been adopted, we have consistently implemented required testing and initiated any necessary treatment to meet those standards and provide for the health and safety of our customers. We are prepared to do that when appropriate standards are adopted for new components, including hexavalent chromium. However, we feel such standards should be developed and adopted in accordance with other provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) - set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and adopted and enforced in Connecticut by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) - rather than on an individual state basis.

EPA is now in the process of conducting a rigorous scientific, risk-based review to determine what, if any, standard should be established for hexavalent chromium. If EPA determines a standard should be adopted, approved methods for testing must be developed and laboratories certified to ensure the data collection will be meaningful. Absent such a scientifically based standard and availability of properly equipped and certified laboratories to conduct the test, we are concerned that data collected in Connecticut on hexavalent chromium would have little meaning and the proposed legislation would have little benefit.

We appreciate the Committee's interest in this issue, particularly after the recent Environmental Working Group Report on hexavalent chromium. We urge the committee, however, not to react to that single study but rather allow an appropriate standard to be developed by the EPA with the same rigor, health based assessments, and scientific process as other water quality regulations to ensure they best protect public health.

We would note that Connecticut's public water suppliers already test for total chromium, which includes hexavalent chromium. According to DPH, there is no record of any Connecticut public water system having exceeded the current federal standard for total chromium so that suggests there is no imminent concern regarding the presence of hexavalent chromium in our water supplies.

Testing for total chromium is part of the rigorous water quality testing already done by public water suppliers in Connecticut, who routinely test for more than 83 potential contaminants and provide treatment of sources to ensure they meet public health standards. Inspections of watershed and aquifer areas that drain into our supplies are performed and Source Water Assessments were conducted by DPH to identify potential risks to our water supplies. The results of those Assessments and our water quality test results are reported each year to our consumers through Consumer Confidence Reports so they have knowledge about the sources and quality of the water they consume.

Connecticut Water strives to deliver our customers quality water and service. We recognize that it is a complex process to adopt appropriate water quality standards that consider the science and the public health risks and benefits. As such, we are prepared to comply with any standards adopted by EPA for hexavalent chromium but respectfully request that the Committee not adopt a standard unique to Connecticut as proposed in HB-6401. We urge you to allow for the development of the standard and the laboratory certification by EPA and know that Connecticut utilities would then be required to comply with the federal standard.

About Connecticut Water Company

Connecticut Water Company is a private water company that serves nearly 90,000 customers or more than 225,000 people in 55 towns in Connecticut. We have 200 employees dedicated to providing our customers and the communities we serve with quality water and service.

We are regulated by the Department of Public Health with respect to the purity and adequacy of our supplies, by the Department of Public Utility Control for rates and quality of service, and by the Department of Environmental Protection for environmental issues. We have a long history of regulatory compliance and stand ready to work with stakeholders to ensure the appropriate laws and regulations are in place to provide for public health, safety and service to our customers.

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